Legion Hooks Fish

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In dealing with Congressman Hamilton Fish, the American Legion convention passed a resolution which refreshingly termed a spade a spade. The Legionnaires recalled some exceedingly unsavory activities of Mr. Fish's past which this newspaper was largely instrumental in exposing to the public view just about two years ago. These activities involved aid to Nazi propagandists and native Fascists—involved the use of the Congressman's official position and of his franking privilege "to disseminate," as the Legion resolution temperately phrased it, "propaganda inimical to the United States."

It is altogether healthy to have these disagreeable memories revived. Hamilton Fish is still a member of Congress. It will not be amiss if we evaluate his present conduct in the light of his past. Apparently he has undergone little change of heart or of mind. For as recently as last April, according to the Legion resolution, a Nazi sympathizer named C. Leon De Aryan, now under Federal indictment for sedition, was using Mr. Fish's frank.

The law governing the use of free-mailing privileges by members of Congress is evidently still not being enforced. Section 335 of the United States Code provides that "It shall be unlawful for any person entitled under the law to the use of a frank to lend said frank or permit its use by any committee, organization, or association, or permit its use by any person for the benefit or use of any such committee, organization, or association . . ." The Legion resolution calls upon the Attorney General "to forever put to an end the misuse of the franking privilege by members of Congress."

After polishing off Mr. Fish in admirable fashion, the Legion went on to proclaim its faith in the type of international cooperation which Mr. Fish has fought so hard to destroy. The Legionnaires believe that the United States can best protect its national interests "by participation in the establishment and maintenance of an association of free and sovereign nations, implemented with whatever force may be necessary to maintain world peace and prevent a recurrence of war." They do not pretend to know precisely what type of organization will be necessary to keep the peace. That question can be decided only when the war is over. But the Legion, like hundreds of other American organizations, is determined to use its influence for joint action with our allies to preserve the security we are now winning at such a terrific cost in lives and human toil. That action quite properly followed the denunciation of Congressman Fish, for it indicates that Fishism is dead, even though the Congressman is still in a position to lend his frank to propagandists of the Nazi stripe.